

1 The Open Space and Trails Committee met on Thursday, February 7, 2019 at Seabrook City Hall, 1700
2 First Street, Seabrook, Texas to discuss and if appropriate, take action on the agenda items listed below.

3
4 **THOSE PRESENT WERE:**

5 Helen Burton	Chair
6 Sally Antrobus	Vice-Chair
7 John Coggeshall	Member
8 Monica Comeaux	Member
9 Debra Harper	Member
10 David Popken (Absent)	Member
11 Heather Cable	Member
12 Sean Landis	Deputy City Manager
13 Stephanie Martinez	Executive Administrative Assistant

14

15 Chair Helen Burton called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

16 **1. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

17
18 There were no comments or announcements.

19
20 **2. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

21
22 **2.1 Discussion on Carothers Coastal Gardens. (Cook)**

23
24 Gayle Cook, City Manager, explained that City Council has been given this same
25 presentation in a previous meeting.

26
27 Ms. Cook started with the history of the property coming into the City's ownership by a
28 bond election was held in 2007 and one proposition on that election ballot was for the
29 purchase of a little over 8 acres from a Seabrook resident and the proposition passed for
30 \$2.5 million. The property was then purchased and closed. Shortly thereafter, a master
31 plan was developed and then ADA building modifications were completed. Once
32 modifications were made, the current event coordinator at the time put together an event
33 pricing list and began marketing the property as a special event venue.

34
35 Ms. Cook further explained that some of the original goals for the property was to hold
36 special events and weddings. There were also goals to have controlled access to the
37 property, be self-supported, be used for photos, business retreats and meetings. Once the
38 Master plan items were completed, an event planner was hired through the
39 Communications Department that manages the property. A lot of the event planner's
40 time is spent at the property and the work is extensive, including bridal shows attendance.
41 Maintenance of the property is handled 100% by the Public Works Department for both
42 annual and one time, special needs such as when the air conditioner was in need of repair.

43 In addition, staff must collaborate with the Open Space and Trails Committee on grounds
44 upkeep, as the Committee volunteers many hours to help the property to look attractive.
45

46 Ms. Cook discussed the Master Plan future visions for the property, which includes
47 improvement of the Todville entrance; installation of continuous lighting; construction of
48 a bird watching deck; an entry monument; new parking areas; restoration of the shoreline
49 and addition of a bird watching tower.
50

51 Ms. Cook explained that Carothers has been incorporated into Pine Gully as a park
52 property through references as such in all ordinances after bond election, and it is defined
53 on the City's mapping system. Staff continued to market for special events, and the City
54 has tried different classes at the location when revenues were failing a bit on forecast,
55 which were labor intensive and hard to get instructors, so the classes were discontinued.
56 The fee structure for weddings and other special events has been amended several times
57 and changed quite a bit as staff has become more knowledgeable and experienced at
58 calculating actual costs.
59

60 There have been 12 public safety calls to property from June 2016 to present, including
61 noise complaints. Council considered a sound wall and natural barrier in 2013-2014 and
62 the rules and regulations for use of the property have changed to conform to surrounding
63 residential complaints. The current rules and regulations are restrictive as to event size
64 and configuration because of problems with parties. The event participants must remain
65 inside, with doors and windows closed to contain noise, resulting in a decrease in noise
66 complaints.
67

68 With regard to the financials for the property, the City saw revenue of \$34,568 in FY
69 2017-2018. There has been a hold on events at this venue at the moment to conduct this
70 research. The budget for the property does not include personnel costs for the Parks
71 Department and Communications Department. Because City staff was attempting to keep
72 up with landscaping, rather than hiring an outside company to take on the job, brides
73 were not satisfied, so now landscaping is built into the fee structure. However, in general
74 there is a lot of upkeep on landscaping and mowing. Communications Department is
75 very intensive to respond to applicants/renters. Also, if there is a noise complaint, Public
76 Safety personnel must drive to the property and take the noise reading.
77

78 Moving forward, the venue is not self-sustaining. Without further improvements, this
79 property is not good waterfront access for the public. The current residential zoning will
80 not allow rentals to large parties. The kitchen cannot be used because it is not up to
81 commercial grade and it is very costly to make the upgrade. Public access is also very

limited. There are still noise complaints, and the maintenance, marketing and personnel costs are more than the revenue.

Council has been made aware of the option to sale a portion of the property. Any proceeds from a sale would need to be for a public purpose, so staff would like to use proceeds to improve the waterfront park area and keep that portion as a City park.

Committee members had several questions, including:

- **What does it cost to maintain each park in the City of Seabrook?**

A little of 1/3 of the Parks Department budget is the cost to maintain each Seabrook park.

- **If you close off the house completely but keep it as part of the property, wouldn't the expense of the house be comparable to the other parks in the City?**

Ms. Cook stated yes, if you separated the maintenance.

- **How and who decided for this park to become a semi-private venue?**

Ms. Cook stated that the masterplan fell through in past when budget meetings were happening it was probably because of talk of the SH146 expansion.

Chair Burton stated that she thinks one of the concerns the previous council had was vandalism of the house if it was open to the public unsupervised.

Vice-Chair Antrobus stated that initial talk about this property was having open space. People voted for open space by expanding Pine Gully Park. Previous council felt the pressure for events activities.

- **How much do you think a certain portion of Carothers would sell for?**

Ms. Cook stated she does not currently know but is working on getting an appraisal.

- **Does the City have any future office expansion needs?**

Ms. Cook stated the City is currently encompassing a growth plan right now at City Hall to build and fulfill expansion needs.

- **Does the City need to sell Carothers because the City needs the money?**

Ms. Cook stated no, the reason this came about for discussion was when staff was looking at the numbers.

- **Do we know when the revenue stream was the highest for Carothers?**

Ms. Cook stated that this past year was the highest revenue stream with around \$35,000 for FY 2017-2018.

- **What is the plan for the trailer/yellow house the city owns? Is there any expense for this building?**

Ms. Cook stated that there is no expense in this building because it is paid for and it is used as a pelican rehab center. When all the fiberglass pelicans around the city need to be fixed, the artist uses that facility.

- **If the City sold Carothers, what would that money be used for? Since the voters voted to increase park land, the selling of this property wouldn't mean you need to spend that money on park land necessarily?**

Ms. Cook stated it would go into the reserves fund that is not allotted for anything or it could be used towards a park project. Legal counsel is still looking at this.

- **Do you know how many days Carothers is used for City functions?**

Ms. Cook stated her estimate is half a dozen times during the year.

- **Could the house and casita be available to rent out to a business/individual?**

Ms. Cook stated that at the moment she wanted to stick to the Master Plan.

- **What happened to the classes that were being held at Carothers?**

Ms. Cook stated some classes were successful and some were not, but the administration behind the classes were very extensive for the Communications Department.

- **Have there been complaints from the neighbors nearby?**

Ms. Cook stated that there has been multiple complaint from different neighbors.

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

3.1 Update on recent and ongoing park activities and improvements from Committee members, and park reports from Committee Park Checks. (Committee)

- Baybrook Park recently had a lot of manicuring.
- Because of the upcoming Lucky Trails Marathon, the Oleanders were cut back due to safety issues.
- Trees of Houston put in the 20 trees in Robinson Park.

3.2 City Staff Update.

No updated information at the time.

3.3 Discussion and approval of the Action Item Checklist. (Committee)

- Volunteers: The Committee Members gave their volunteer hours to Chair Burton during the meeting to keep records current. Chair Burton took two new volunteers on the Seabrook Park tour.
- Birding Events: No updated information at the time.
- Erosion at Pine Gully: The project will start in the Spring.
- Mile Marker Trail Maps: This project is on-going.
- Pollinator Pathway: Hoping to get consultants from the zoo, when the avenue for native plants has been decided.
- Seabrook Prairie: The Parks Department will mow the Prairie when the land is dry enough after all the rain received.
- Seed Library: The only thing needed is a card catalog. Member Cables stated she has a lot of seeds saved for the catalog. The Seaside Garden Club said they can advertise the Seed Library.
- Trash Cans & Recycling: The Boy Scouts have finished the recycling bins but they have not been disbursed around the city yet.
- Tree Planting: On February 21, 2019, Gulf Winds will be out at Wildlife Park planting trees.
- Woodlands Regeneration: No updated information at the time.
- Irrigation System at Pine Gully & Baybrook: No updated information at the time.
- Deforestation: Deputy City Manager, Sean Landis stated that Seabrook City Council recently approved the new landscaping ordinance. Mr. Landis will present a PowerPoint to the Committee at the next meeting explaining the changes. Member Cable is worried that we are losing a lot of the forest area for the critters in the City. There is a lot of construction happening and the animals are being pushed out.
- Interpretive Sign Covering Projects: The Committee is hoping Scouts or volunteers will come forward to take on the task to create a cover to keep bird droppings off the signs.
- Wood Frames Around Park Signs: The wooden frames around the park signs have been removed and the parks look better now.
- Specific Bird Feeder Removal: There are several bird feeders that are not being used and look unsightly that need to be removed.
- Keep Texas Beautiful Grant: Member Antrobus has started the grant since the deadline is quickly approaching on February 15, 2019.
- Texas Park and Wildlife Grant: The grant application has been submitted. The City and Committee awaits the results.

3.4 Approve the minutes of the January 3, 2019 Open Space and Trails Committee meeting. (Hicks)

No action was taken. By Committee consensus, this item is moved to the next agenda.

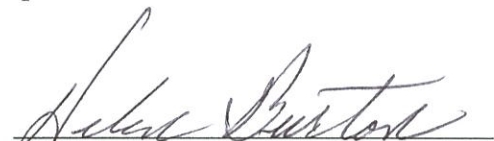
3.5 Establish future meeting dates and agenda items. (Committee)


The next meeting date will be March 7, 2019.

Upon Committee consensus, the next agenda items include:

- Sidewalk extension at Park Drive
- Carothers Coastal Gardens

Upon motion duly made, the meeting was adjourned at 6:22 p.m.


Helen Burton,
Chair


Stephanie Martinez,
Executive Administrative Assistant



Carother's Coastal Gardens

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

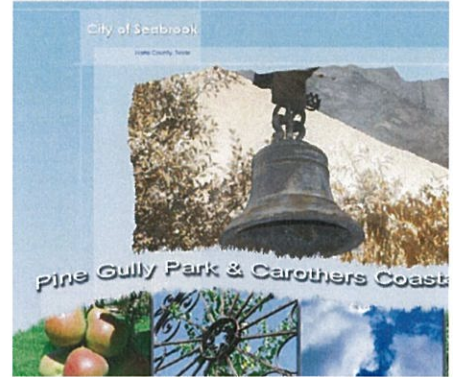
DECEMBER 18, 2018

Overview

- ☐ History
- ☐ Master Plan
- ☐ Map and Property Description
- ☐ Current Use
- ☐ Financials
- ☐ Legal Considerations
- ☐ Future Option

History

- In 2007, the City of Seabrook held a bond election for the purchase of 8.33 acres previously owned by Drucilla Carothers private residence
- Proposition Passed \$2.5 million
- Property Purchased and Closed
- Master Plan developed \$16,000
- ADA/Building Modifications Completed \$29,000
- Venue and Event Price Listing Released



Master Plan: Goals


1. Provide a destination for **weddings and special events**
2. Allow Photograph and commercials props
3. Control access to site with gated entry
4. Surveillance cameras or security
5. **Business retreat and meetings**
6. Chamber of Commerce Meetings
7. Separate meeting spaces for more than one small function at one time
8. **Financially self supported**
9. Concessions on Active Park
10. Portable Bait Shop
11. Restore Wetlands
12. Walking track
13. Different Zones

Master Plan: Facts

1. ADA Requirements
2. Granite Pillars to be repurposed
3. Keep the tennis court
4. 55 person building capacity



Master Plan: Needs Completed

1. ADA Compliance Modifications
 2. Event Planner hired
 3. Bridal Show Attendance
 4. Maintenance (Annual and Special One –Time)
 5. Collaboration with Open Space Committee
 6. Parking Lot – Built
 7. Directional Signage Installed
 8. ADA Bathroom Constructed
 9. Furnishings Purchased
 10. Approved Event Vendors List Utilitized
- 

Master Plan: Future Visions

Todville Entrance Improvement

Continuous Lighting along Pine Gully Road

Add Bird Watching Deck

Entry Monument and Kiosk

New Parking areas

Restore shoreline and add bird watching tower

Property

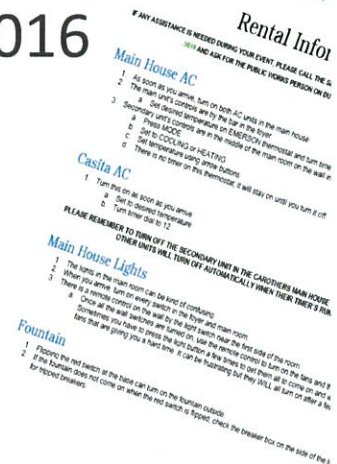
Approximately 11.566 acres in gross

8.433 Net Surface Area



Current Use

- Special Event Venue for Rent
- Classes for Fee were piloted 2016
- Marketing Campaigns
 - Weddings
 - Meetings / Retreats



Current Use: Fee Structure

Carrothers Coastal Gardens Rental Fee (Res. No. 2014-04)

Hourly Deposit (per hour)	\$50/hr
Hourly Rental (2 hours minimum): RESIDENT	\$110/hr
Hourly Rental (2 hour minimum): NON RESIDENT	\$125/hr
Half Day Deposit	\$250
Half Day Rental (5 hour minimum, 7 hour max.): RESIDENT	\$575
Half Day Rental (5 hour minimum, 7 hour max.): NON RESIDENT	\$700
Full Day Deposit	\$500
Full Day Rental: RESIDENT	\$1650 (Janitorial Services Included)
Full Day Rental: NON RESIDENT	\$1950 (Janitorial Services Included)
Non-Profit Discount (proof of non-profit status required)	20%
Optional Lawn Prep	\$300
Projection & PA System	\$175

Current Use: Public Safety Calls

- 12 calls to the property (June 2016- Present)
- Noise Complaints
- Sound Wall and Natural Barrier considered by Council (2013-14)
- Rules and Regulations Changed to Conform to Surrounding Residential Complaints
- Current Rules and Regulations – Restrictive to event size and configuration



Expenses

Labor and Equipment Costs \$174,000




Labor and Equipment Detail

- Parks Maintenance Workers
 - Approximately 80 hours weekly – Average
 - Additional time recorded in summer and special projects
 - Generally 4 workers
- Maintenance Technician
 - 7-10 hours weekly
- Marketing and Communications / Event Coordinator
 - 20 hours weekly
- Equipment Use
 - Mowers and Work Vehicles



Expenses

General Expenses	\$ 18,520
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- Service Agreements: Internet, Alarm, Pest Control
 - General Maintenance: Lights, Supplies, General Repairs (ex. Conditioner 17-18 \$6,600)
 - Utilities: Gas, Water, Electricity
- 

Expense Total

\$188,520

Bond

\$164,435 Annual Bond Payment

\$2,195,386 Outstanding Debt

Total Annual Expenses

\$352,955



Financials: Revenue

Fiscal Year:

2017 - 18 \$ 34,568

2018 - 19 \$ 9,562



Financials: Personnel O&M

PUBLIC WORKS

- Property Checks
- Pre and Post event monitoring, tasks and clean up
- Landscaping (General)
- Mowing (Maintenance)



COMMUNICATIONS/EVENTS

- Showings
- Application Assistance
- Application Workflow
- FAQ Follow Ups
- Frequent calls up to and during weekend events

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Noise Complaints
- Noise Readings
- Monitoring Site
- Off duty scheduling

Considerations Moving Forward

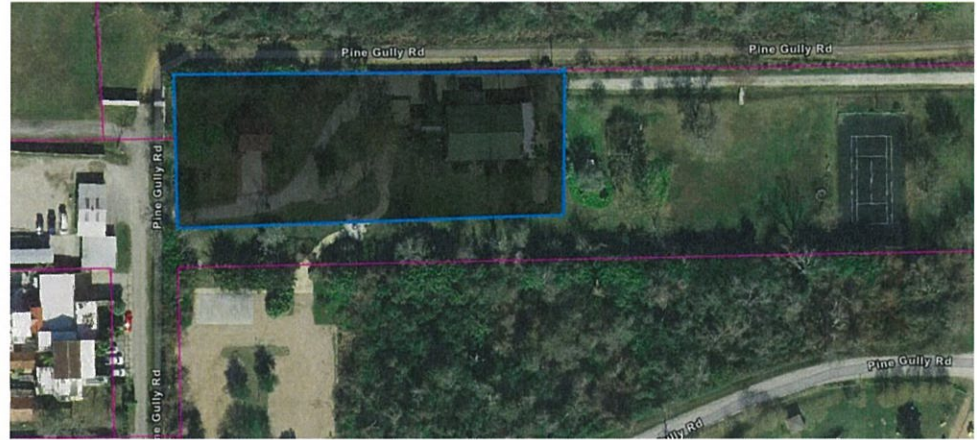
- ☐ Venue is not self sustaining
- ☐ Without further improvements, it is not good waterfront access to public
- ☐ Current Zoning has decreased types of rental opportunities
- ☐ Kitchen is not able to be used by renters (Costly commercial upgrades needed)
- ☐ Residential Noise Complaints
- ☐ Maintenance, Marketing, and Managing of Property – Personnel Costs are not reflective of Carothers Budget and do not reflect the true annual O&M for facility
- ☐ Public Access limited

Sale

Option to Consider

Sale of House and Casita

Retain Waterfront Public Access



Discussion

Questions ?
